



# Effective Health Care

## Strategies to Improve the Nurse-Physician Relationship

### Nomination Summary Document

#### Results of Topic Selection Process & Next Steps

- *Strategies to Improve the Nurse-Physician Relationship* is not feasible for a full systematic review due to the limited data available for a review at this time. This topic could potentially be considered for new research.

#### Topic Description

**Nominator(s):** Individual

**Nomination Summary:** The nominator, a student nurse working in a physician's practice, is concerned about the dynamics between nurses and physicians. The nominator states that collaboration between nurses and physicians leads to improved patient outcomes. The nominator is specifically concerned about the bullying and harassment of nurses. The nominator is also interested in interventions to improve collaboration and the nurse-physician relationship.

#### **Staff-Generated PICO**

**Population(s):** Nurses, physicians and other health care providers

**Intervention(s):** Strategies to improve nurse-physician relationship, communication and collaboration (e.g., team-based training with emphasis on a patient care team approach, constructive conflict resolution, and interdisciplinary rounding)

**Comparator(s):** Those listed above (i.e., compared to each other, usual practice)

**Outcome(s):** Between-provider communication, collaboration; patient satisfaction and improved patient health outcomes; provider outcomes including work satisfaction, retention, quality of life, etc.

**Key Questions from Nominator:** Original question: When nurses work collaboratively with physicians, there is increased patient satisfaction and better outcomes. How do we get rid of this oppression and oppressive behaviors? Nurses and doctors would work more collaboratively if the physicians had some kind of incentive to make them treat nurses better. Bullying, violence and burnout are all linked to oppression.

In consultation with our clinical reviewer, we revised the scope of the question to the following: What is the comparative effectiveness of interventions to improve the physician-nurse relationship or encourage team-based care in order to improve outcomes such as communication, collaboration, patient satisfaction and health outcomes, or provider outcomes (e.g., work satisfaction, retention, quality of life)?

## Considerations

- With the recent emphasis on patient-centered interdisciplinary teams, maintaining a functional collaboration between physicians and nursing staff is critical to quality patient care. Poor nurse-physician relationships can stem from various issues such as poor communication and lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities. This can lead to negative effects on job satisfaction, high turnover, and low quality of life for nursing staff. It can also negatively affect patient outcomes.
- AHRQ published a systematic review relevant to the topic in 2007 regarding care coordination strategies.
  - McDonald KM, Sundaram V, Bravata DM, et al. AHRQ technical reviews. Closing the quality gap: A critical analysis of quality improvement strategies (vol. 7: Care coordination). Rockville (MD): Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (US); 2007.
- Other identified systematic reviews addressed only part of the topic. Some of these products were setting-specific or limited the population or outcomes of interest.
- Relevant identified studies primarily investigated providers' views, opinions, or prevalence of communication and collaboration in the health care setting and did not study interventions to improve outcomes.
- Studies which did study interventions for improving collaboration and communication appeared to be varying in nature and generally examined the implementation of specialized or localized interventions. Moreover, the search identified few studies examining interventions to improve provider-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, turnover, stress and quality of life.